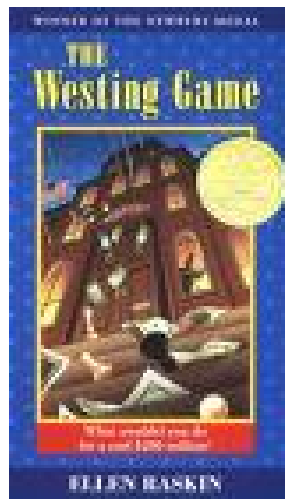


The Westing Game by Ellen Raskin



8th Grade Literature Unit
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Pre-Reading Activities

Mystery Prior Knowledge

What makes a good mystery? Have students work together to create a class web of their previous experiences with mystery. Make a web of all words students brainstorm regarding the topic. Further guidance can include popular writers of the genre, synonyms, common characteristics/parts/components to mystery, setting/mood/tone, etc.

Predictions about Characters

Use the graphic organizer Predicting Character Traits. Listing only the character names, have students make predictions about the characters and personality traits. Return to prediction chart after Chapter 5, or another close chapter near the beginning, to verify predictions.

Truth and Lies

There are lots of reasons for lying. Make a list of some different reasons people lie to one another. Does everyone lie? What kind of lie is worse than another? Is lying ever okay? Create a situation when lying to someone would be acceptable.

Book At a Glance

After glancing at only the book cover and title, have students make a prediction about the storyline. Even though they already know the genre is mystery/suspense, what tone or mood will the story have? Serious? Funny? Predictable? How will the chess pieces fit into the mystery? The fireworks and American flag? Revisit the predictions after the story to see if anyone was close.

Background Information: Ellen Raskin

Have students research the author of *The Westing Game*, Ellen Raskin, noting any other books she has written and personal life information. Students can present information in a variety of ways, including brochures, posters, verbal presentations, or in paragraph form. Based on her background and other novels written, what kind of story will *The Westing Game* be?

Background Information: The Newberry Medal

The Westing Game was awarded several prizes: the Newberry Medal, the Boston Globe/Horn Book Award, and an ALA Notable Book award. Students can research these various awards noting other books that have received this distinction. What predictions can be made from these awards?

During-Reading Activities By Chapter

CHAPTER 1: Sunset Towers

Chapter Summary

The story begins with a description of a building, Sunset Towers. On the Fourth of July, delivery boy Barney Northrup delivers letters to the six random people whom “someone” has chosen to live in this luxurious new building. The first appointment is with Jake and Grace Wexler in which the deliveryman persuades Grace but gives Jake an uneasy feeling. Another chosen tenant is not quite as impressed—Sydelle Pulaski. The apartment she is shown isn’t as stellar as the Wexler’s, but Barney convinces her as well. By the end of the day, Barney has convinced all six families to move in to the Sunset Towers, already having their names printed on the mailboxes. However, Barney had rented one apartment to the wrong person.

Vocabulary

Tenant- one that pays rent to use land, a building, or other property owned by another

Exclusive- shutting out all others from a part or share

Plush- expensively or showily luxurious

Stationery- writing materials, as pens, pencils, paper, and envelopes

Warped- to become bent or twisted out of shape

Chandelier- decorative lighting fixture that holds bulbs or candles and is hung from a ceiling

Alcove- a recess or partly enclosed extension connected to or forming part of a room

Bookie- a gambler who accepts and pays off bets (especially on horse races)

Comprehension Questions

1. Why is Sunset Towers an unusual name for this building?
2. What was unusual about Barney Northrup, the delivery man?
3. Why was Jake Wexler uncomfortable at the new apartment?
4. How did Barney finally convince Sydelle Pulaski to take the apartment?
5. What was one way that this apartment sale was different than normal?

CHAPTER 2: Ghosts or Worse

Chapter Summary

The new tenants move in. Shin Hoo's Restaurant has their big opening on the fifth floor, but it's a flop—only three people come. In contrast, the Theodorakis Coffee Shop in the lobby enjoys brisk business from tenants and workers from nearby Westingtown. The afternoon of Halloween, four people are standing outside the Sunset Towers driveway: the doorman Sandy McSouthers, high-school seniors Theo Theodorakis and Doug Hoo, and delivery boy Otis Amber. Junior-high student Turtle Wexler bicycles up to them with news of smoke coming out of the Westing House chimney. Otis assures everyone that old man Westing is most likely dead. Sandy thinks this is fair, as the cheerful doorman is still bitter about losing his job at the Westing paper mill twenty years earlier.

Sandy and Odis spin the tale of the two “unfortunate fellows” from Westingtown who visited the house exactly a year ago. They mention the story of a one-dollar bet that the two boys couldn't stay in the house for five minutes. They barely got inside when they were chased out by a ghost - or worse. One fell over the cliff; the other emerged with bloody hands and has only repeated two words since then: “Purple waves.” Turtle responds that for two dollars per minute, she'll go to that house. From the front window of 2D, Chris Theodorakis watches his brother and the others accept Turtle's bet. When Theo gets home he will tell him about what he saw in his binoculars—the person with a limp that he saw enter the Westing House. Chris is confined to a wheelchair and prone to violent spasms but likes to watch birds.

Vocabulary

Stocky- 1. solidly built; sturdy 2. chubby; plump

Maggots- the wormlike larva of any of various flies, often found in decaying matter

Gruesome- shockingly repellent; inspiring horror; gross

Stubble- short stiff hairs growing on a man's face when he has not shaved for a few days

Comprehension Questions

1. Which was more successful—the grand opening of Shin Hoo's Chinese restaurant or the parking lot coffee shop? Why do you think?
2. Who was Sandy McSouthers?
3. What was different about the Westing House that surprised Turtle Wexler?
4. Tell the story of the two “unfortunate fellows” from Westingtown.
5. What does Chris notice through his binoculars?
6. Chris is different from other people. How? What do you think is “wrong” with him?

CHAPTER 3: Tenants In and Out

Chapter Summary

In her family's apartment, Angela Wexler is being fitted for her wedding dress by Flora Baumbach, the dressmaker who lives on the second floor. Grace, Angela's mother, watches on. Angela tells her mother she saw smoke coming from the Westing House, news that Turtle also brings. In Doctor Wexler's office, Mrs. Crow also sees the smoke from the Westing House as Jake Wexler is cutting out a corn on her foot. At Hoo's restaurant, Mr. Hoo is skeptical of the story Doug tells of Westing's corpse rotting on some kind of Oriental rug. Hoo thinks that if Westing is home again, he won't get off so easy this time.

Sandy McSouthers salutes Judge J.J. Ford as she drives up in her Mercedes and points out the smoke from the Westing House. She considers how to gather money if Sam Westing has indeed returned. Chris Theodorakis tries to tell Theo about the limping man but his stuttering overwhelms him. Instead, Theo tells a scary story of Westing dead and rotting on the Oriental rug, much to Chris' delight. Even though she is limping now, Sydelle Pulaski is never noticed by anyone. The only person who pays attention to her is crippled Chris Theodorakis, whom she pities. However, her purchases today - painting utensils and crutches - will get her noticed.

Vocabulary

Hassock- a thick, firm cushion used as a footstool or for kneeling

Pudgy- short and plump

Lunatic- an insane person; a person whose actions and manner are marked by extreme eccentricity or recklessness

Podiatrist- a specialist in care for the feet

Amputation- to cut off (all or part of a limb or digit of the body), as by surgery

Gaunt- extremely thin and bony

Avert- to turn away

Ample- more than enough

Putrid- in a state of foul decay or decomposition, as animal or vegetable matter; rotten

Comprehension Questions

1. Why is Angela Wexler standing on a hassock (stool)?
2. How does Mrs. Baumbach know the Wexlers?
3. Describe Mrs. Wexler's relationship with her two daughters.
4. What happens if you touch Turtle's braided hair?
5. How is J.J. Ford connected with Mr. Westing?
6. What was in the long package that Sydelle Pulaski carried into her apartment?

CHAPTER 4: The Corpse Found

Chapter Summary

As Doug Hoo watches and keeps time, Turtle in her witch costume steps into the old Westing House determined not to be scared and earn herself some money. After only eleven minutes, Turtle screams and runs out of the house. She has seen the corpse, but it's not like the stories. She finds him tucked into his bed. Very early the next day, Turtle sees in the newspaper that Sam Westing was found dead. The newspaper's obituary tells of Westing's love of games and chess and his elaborate Fourth of July firework displays. However, there was no explanation of how the body was found, nor of the envelope at the bedside with the message *If I am found dead in bed*, nor mention of any footprint tracks left by Doug or Turtle. At noon Otis Amber delivers sixteen letters from attorney E.J. Plum, naming the recipients as beneficiaries of Samuel W. Westing's estate and asking them to attend the reading of the will at 4 PM the next day. Nearly all are stunned at the news that they are heirs.

Vocabulary

Receding- to slope backward

Vigil- a devotional watching, or keeping awake, during the customary hours of sleep

Immigrant- a person who migrates to another country, usually for permanent residence

Meager- deficient in amount or quality or extent; not a lot

Pyrotechnic- resembling fireworks; brilliant

Coroner- a person who investigates any death not clearly resulting from natural causes

Executor- a person named in a decedent's will to carry out the provisions of that will

Beneficiary- a person designated as the receiver of funds or other property under a will, trust, insurance policy, etc.

Heiress- a woman who inherits or has a right of inheritance

Legacy- anything handed down from the past, as from an ancestor or predecessor

Comprehension Questions

1. Why was Doug Hoo waiting outside the Westing House?
2. What did Turtle find upon entering the house?
3. What did Turtle take upstairs to protect herself?
4. What game does Mr. Westing's obituary say he played?
5. Why were sixteen people given letters from Mr. Westing?

CHAPTER 5: The Sixteen Heirs

Chapter Summary

With the exception of Jake, the Wexler family arrives at the Westing House for the reading of the will. Grace believes that she is the only true heir, remembering some family gossip about a rich Uncle Sam. They are greeted at the door by Crow, the Sunset Towers cleaning woman. The lawyer E.J. Plum is in the library. While peeking into the open coffin, Turtle sees her mother's silver cross necklace in the hands of Sam Westing. Doctor Denton Deere, Angela's fiancé, also shows up for the reading of the will.

Sixteen people in all arrive for the reading of the Westing estate: The Wexler family, except for father Jake; Chris and Theo—but not their parents; Doug and Mr. Hoo—but not his wife; Judge J.J. Ford, Flora Baumbach, Otis Amber, Sandy McSouthers, Mrs. Crow, and Sydelle Pulaski. Sydelle takes out her notebook and prepares to take notes.

Vocabulary

Appraise- to determine the worth of; assess

Mourning- sorrow for a person's death

Monogram- decorative letter; applied initial

Relinquish- to give up; put aside or desist from

Aviator- one who operates an aircraft; a pilot

Invalid- a person who is too sick or weak to care for himself or herself

Convulsion- an intense, involuntary muscular contraction; spasm

Afflicted- mentally or physically unfit; impaired

Morbid- suggesting an unhealthy mental state; gloomy

Diagnosis- the process of determining by examination of a diseased condition

Scrutiny- surveillance; close and continuous watching or guarding

Incompetence- lack of physical or intellectual ability or qualifications

Poise- a dignified, self-confident manner or bearing; composure

Comprehension Questions

1. Who was at the door greeting the beneficiaries at the Westing home?
2. In his coffin, Sam Westing is holding something in his hands. What is it?
3. Why is Judge J.J. Ford surprised to see E.J. Plum in charge of the Westing estate?
4. What did the design on Sydelle Pulaski's dress remind Turtle of?

CHAPTER 6: The Westing Will

Chapter Summary

The lawyer Edgar Jennings Plum introduces himself, explains that he's never met Sam Westing, but assures the heirs that the will is legal. He then reads the will, which is broken down into numbered sections, such as FIRST and SECOND. When the will states that Westing has gathered his sixteen nieces and nephews, Grace Wexler yells in surprise - and, as written in the will, is told to sit down. Westing also writes in his will that he did not die of natural causes, but his life was taken by one of the sixteen.

During the reading of the will, Sandy McSouthers shouts out a joke, which amuses some and angers others—while talking over the lawyer in the meantime. The will then mentions the heirs will play the Westing Game, but before they begin, a moment of silence is given for the deceased.

Vocabulary

Verified- confirmed as truth or accurate

Eccentric- something that is unusual, peculiar, or odd

Appalled- struck with fear, dread, or consternation; shocked

Purported- reputed or claimed; alleged

Slur- a disparaging remark; insult

Autopsy- inspection and dissection of a body after death, as for determination of the cause of death; postmortem examination

Embalmed- to treat (a corpse) with preservatives in order to prevent decomposition

Cremated- to reduce (a dead body) to ashes by fire

Culprit- a person or other agent guilty of or responsible for an offense or fault

Corrupt- guilty of dishonest practices, as bribery; lacking integrity

Reverence- a gesture indicative of deep respect

Comprehension Questions

1. When the will is first read, what does he call the 16 people present that shocks them?
2. In his will, Mr. Westing claims he did not die of natural causes. How did he die?
3. What must the potential beneficiaries do if they wish to "strike it rich"?
4. Explain Mr. Hoo's comment, "The poor are crazy, the rich just eccentric."

CHAPTER 7: The Westing Game

Chapter Summary

In the game room, eight card tables are set up. Theo finds someone has started a chess game and plays along. Plum continues the reading of the will with the rules of the Westing Game: sixteen players will be teamed up in pairs. Each pair receives \$10,000 and a set of clues. The pairs are announced: Madame Sun Lin Hoo and Jake Wexler, who are not present; Turtle Wexler and Flora Baumbach; Chris Theodorakis and Denton Deere; Sandy McSouthers with J.J. Ford; Grace Windsor Wexler and James Shin Hoo; Berthe Erica Crow and Otis Amber; Theo Theodorakis and Doug Hoo; and Sydelle Pulaski and Angela Wexler.

Once paired, everyone looks at their clues except Angela and Sydelle, who listen for the others' clues. Judge Ford is offended by her clues and tells Sandy that she's leaving the game, but Sandy begs her to stay for financial reasons; if she quits, they both forfeit the \$10,000. Turtle and Flora swallow their clues after memorizing them. The lawyer says that no copies of the will can be made, but the heirs realize they do have a copy: the notes Sydelle Pulaski took.

Vocabulary

Jittery- extremely tense and nervous; jumpy

Forfeit- something to which the right is lost

Jaunty- having a buoyant or self-confident air

Pompous- characterized by excessive self-esteem or exaggerated dignity; pretentious

Indignant- expressing strong displeasure at something considered unjust, offensive, or insulting

Shrewd- disposed to artful and cunning practices; tricky

Wafted- to float easily and gently, as on the air; drift

Dialect- a special variety of a language

Comprehension Questions

1. Describe the room where the 16 heirs hear about the Westing Game.
2. What was the object of the game?
3. Why was Chris happy to be selected to play the game?
4. What does each pair receive in order to play?
5. Who is Turtle paired with?
6. Why was Sandy so insistent that his partner, Judge Ford, play the game?

CHAPTER 8: The Paired Heirs

Chapter Summary

The snowfall from last night has become a blizzard, trapping all of the tenants in Sunset Towers or at their respective places of work. The tenants of Sunset Towers are stuck in the building with no telephone or electricity. In the blizzard, most of the partners are working on their clues. Sydelle and Angela have been invited to visit seven tenants, all wanting to see her copy of the will. Although she isn't invited, Sydelle visits Chris Theodorakis and is condescending to him, which makes Angela uncomfortable. Chris knows that Sydelle is faking her limp, so he's not afraid to ask her for help with his clues: FOR PLAIN GRAIN SHED. After a discussion about grains, Chris believes he's found the killers: Otis Amber and Judge Ford.

Turtle believes the clues she and her partner were given were meant for the stock market. Turtle and Flora use their clues as stock market investments. She puts together a list of stocks to invest and includes Westing Paper Products, as per the closing line of the will. Mr. Hoo and Grace look over their clues (FRUITED PURPLE WAVES FOR SEA) but get lost trying to interpret them as well. Doug is putting his half of the check into his savings account; Theo's half goes to his parents. The clues they have are HIS N ON TO THEE FOR, which are confusing. Theo predicts that everyone's clues will add up to one message for everyone. Theo mentions that he was playing chess with someone in the game room but has no idea with whom.

Judge Ford is insulted by the clues she received: SKIES AM SHINING BROTHER. Looking over her clues and the certificate of sanity the lawyer gave her, she recognizes the name Sidney Sikes, MD. The newspaper obituary had said he was a friend of Westing and they were both involved in a near-fatal automobile accident. Judge Ford thinks that Sam Westing is using this game to punish one of these "heirs." She wonders how everyone is connected beyond Sunset Towers and realizes that is a good starting point. With the telephones working again, she calls up Barney Northrup and the newspaper and asks for information about every one of the heirs. Angela sneaks into Turtle's room and finds their clues: GOOD GRACE FROM HOOD SPACIOUS. Because Angela and Sydelle listened during the original clue reveal, they overheard several others; they lay everyone's clues out: KING QUEEN PURPLE WAVES ON (NO) GRAINS MOUNTAIN (EMPTY). By the end, they discover someone had stolen Sydelle's notebook.

Vocabulary

Rite- a particular form or system of religious or other ceremonial practice

Stint- a period of time spent doing something

Inscrutable- incapable of being investigated, analyzed, or scrutinized

Pretentious- intended to attract notice and impress others

Incriminating- to accuse of or present proof of a crime or fault

Pool- to make a common interest of; combine

Divisive- something that is creating, or tending to create, division, separation, or difference

Comprehension Questions

1. How was Turtle able to make money from the blizzard?
2. What are many of the heirs trying to do during the snowstorm?
3. What does J. J. Ford hope to do just once?
4. What did Sydelle Pulaski lose and why it is so important?

CHAPTER 9: Lost and Found

Chapter Summary

The next morning, the residents begin a bulletin board, posting index cards with notes asking for lost items, advertisements for local restaurants, and jokes played on each other. The two main notes are for the return of Sydelle's notebook—which contains the notes from the will—and an invitation to an informal party at Judge Ford's apartment at eight o'clock that evening. Grace Wexler feigns caring for her younger daughter by fixing her hair and giving her compliments, but it's all an act to coerce Turtle into revealing her clues. The newspaper returns Judge Ford's earlier call to let her know about newspaper clippings that mention the other heirs. She finds out over the phone that Mr. Hoo had claimed that Westing stole his idea for the disposable paper diaper. There's also a stack of clippings on Doug Hoo's high-school sports accomplishments and a good deal of Westing clippings still unread. Ford hangs up, as the party begins.

Vocabulary

Tardy- late; not on time

Defiantly- boldly resistant or challenging

Uppity- affecting an attitude of inflated self-esteem; haughty; snobbish

Jabbering- to talk rapidly or unintelligibly

Hors d'oeuvres- a dish served as an appetizer before the main meal

Comprehension Questions

1. Why is Turtle's mom being so nice to her before the party?
2. What was happening at J. J. Ford's apartment that evening?
3. Give two examples from this chapter that Grace dislikes Turtle and favors her other daughter, Angela.
4. What did Judge Ford find out about Mr. Hoo over the phone?

CHAPTER 10: The Long Party

Chapter Summary

Grace and Jake Wexler are the first to arrive, not wanting to be fashionably late. The party goes on and on, as no one wants to leave and possibly miss a clue. Angela is upset for two reasons: everyone mentions Denton when speaking to her and Grace scolded her in front of everyone for dressing up in a "twin" costume with Sydelle. Jake then attempts a conversation with Madame Hoo, who doesn't speak English. Sydelle, convinced that the murderer is a twin, tries to start conversations about twins with everyone, to no avail.

Judge Ford studies the only pair in Sunset Towers who are not heirs, George and Catherine Theodorakis—Chris and Theo's parents. Chris continues to watch legs for a limp. There's a long line at the bar as Theo tries to explain chess to Sydelle. Unable to hide her disgust with her mother's comments, Angela rushes into the kitchen to be alone; she is surprised when she finds Crow there, who provides little comfort. Disappointed that there were no further clues, the guests end the party and return to their rooms.

Vocabulary

Prattle- to talk in a foolish or simple-minded way; chatter; babble

Appetizer- a small portion of a food or drink served before or at the beginning of a meal

Paternal- related on the father's side

Embrace- to take or clasp in the arms; hug

Humiliation- the state of being humiliated or disgraced; shame

Chiding- to express disapproval of; scold

Hobbled- to walk lamely; limp

Coiffure- a style of arranging or combing the hair

Abstention- withholding of a vote

Grimaced- a facial expression, often ugly or contorted, which indicates disapproval

Comprehension Questions

1. Why was Grace on time for Judge Ford's party when normally she would arrive late?
2. Why does Angela become upset when everyone continually asks about Denton?
3. What is Chris looking for when he watches the party guests' legs?
4. Who does Angela see when she rushes into Judge Ford's kitchen?

CHAPTER 11: The Meeting

Chapter Summary

The guests are hesitant about attending today's meeting, of whether or not to share their clues with the other heirs. Turtle asks Flora to braid her hair; they begin talking of Flora's dead daughter Rosalie and Turtle complains that her mother doesn't think she's beautiful. Flora finds out Turtle's real name is Alice. There's a new message on the bulletin board offering a reward by Judge Ford for the return of a gold railroad watch inscribed to her father. Chris makes a realization that the Judge's name and apartment are the same: Ford, 4D.

Theo, who runs the meeting, has called everyone together to see if pooling all clues together could help them all make sense of the will, splitting the inheritance. Sydelle says she should get a larger share because of her notes, which provokes Mr. Hoo to slam the shorthand notebook on the counter. Sydelle grabs the book and calls Hoo a thief, but he says he found it on a table in his restaurant this morning; Grace Wexler adds that she looked at the book, but it didn't translate into words. Sydelle then reveals that she wrote the shorthand in Polish.

Saying she has questions, Judge Ford suggests that people write anonymous questions on paper and read them aloud. The first question is if anybody is a twin, which no one answers; the second is about Turtle's real name, which Grace Wexler says is "Tabitha-Ruth" and Flora Baumbach says is "Alice" simultaneously. The third question asks who has actually met Sam Westing and only Mr. Hoo raises his hand; Judge Ford has also met Sam Westing in person but does not raise her hand since it's her own question. The last question—who was kicked last week—goes unanswered as panic ensues!

Vocabulary

Lured- to attract, entice, or tempt; allure

Scoffing- to show or express derision or scorn

Contempt- the feeling with which a person regards anything considered mean, vile, or worthless

Vault- to extend or stretch over in the manner of an arch

Envy- a feeling of jealousy with regard to another's advantages, success, possessions, etc

Sequined- something decorated with small shiny ornamental disks, often sewn on cloth

Larcenist- a person who commits larceny (stealing)

Felon- One who has committed a felony (an offense, as murder or burglary, of graver character than those called misdemeanors)

Alibis- defense by an accused person of being elsewhere when an offense was committed

Sprawling- to sit or lie with the limbs spread out awkwardly

Comprehension Questions

1. What dilemma did the tenants face as they awoke on the third snowbound morning?
2. What do we discover about Flora Baumbach?
3. What does Turtle say her real name is?
4. Why could no one read Sydelle Pulaski's notes from the will?
5. What does Theo suggest to the other heirs who have gathered for a meeting?
6. Why is there confusion about Turtle's real name at the meeting?
7. What question did Judge Ford write on the paper?

CHAPTER 12: The First Bomb

Chapter Summary

Loud bangs fiercely interrupt the meeting. Mrs. Theodorakis runs out of the kitchen, covered in “blood” (actually tomato sauce). Everyone but Sydelle goes into the kitchen, which is covered in tomato sauce and fire extinguisher foam. Hoo thinks the cans of tomato sauce exploded from stove heat, but George Theodorakis insists it was a bomb. Catherine Theodorakis says there's no real damage, but they'll need several days to clean up, at which Mr. Hoo smiles. Later, Sydelle and Angela begin transcribing the will's notes back into English. Turtle knocks on the door demanding the return of the newspaper Angela stole, reminding her that her engagement ring is on the sink again and to be wary of thieves. Sydelle and Turtle get into an argument in which harsh words are exchanged and truths are unearthed, including Turtle's big mouth, Angela's unhappy engagement, and Sydelle's crutch.

The newspaperman calls Judge Ford with another article with a Westing heir: George Theodorakis—Chris and Theo's dad. There's no article, only a photo, of George as Violet Westing's date twenty years ago. She now knows of four heirs with Westing connections: James Hoo, Theo's father, Sandy McSouthers, and herself. She decides to hire a private detective, looks in a phone book under investigators and makes an interesting discovery: the private investigator is someone she has already talked to, under another name.

Vocabulary

Woozy- physically out of sorts, as with dizziness, faintness, or slight nausea

Transcribing- to make a written copy

Obituary- a notice of the death of a person, often with a biographical sketch, as in a newspaper

Unbolted- to release the bolts of (a door, for example); unlock

Paraphernalia- personal belongings

Sappy- excessively sentimental

Intern- a person who works as an apprentice or trainee in an occupation or profession

Prop- any movable articles or objects used on the set of a play or movie

Caption- a title or explanation for a picture or illustration

Comprehension Questions

1. Describe what happens to Mrs. Theodorakis in the kitchen.
2. What does Angela return to Turtle that she had stolen?
3. According to Judge Ford, who are the four people with Westing connections?
4. What is strange when Judge Ford calls a private detective from the phone book?

CHAPTER 13: The Second Bomb

Chapter Summary

Another bomb has been planted in Shin Hoo's Chinese Restaurant, planning to detonate at 6:30. Everyone but Mr. and Mrs. Theodorakis come down to the restaurant; they order up, staying in their rooms. Grace Wexler plays hostess and seats people based on her own pairings, separating the couples at the door. Sydelle and Chris, the cripples, enjoy a light-hearted meal; Angela and Theo struggle to make conversation with each other; Judge Ford and Mrs. Baumbach discuss Flora's past making wedding gowns, including Mr. Westing's daughter—Violet's—wedding gown; Turtle sits with her father Jake and listens to the stock market through her radio earpiece while her father rambles to himself. Mr. Hoo quietly asks Jake Wexler about the upcoming Packers game to which Turtle announces she knows her father is a bookie.

The bomb in Hoo's Restaurant goes off just as Otis Amber enters. Sydelle Pulaski had gone to give her "compliments to the chef" when the bomb exploded, spraining her ankle. With the sprinkler system going, they call an ambulance and Sydelle is brought to the hospital, Angela by her side. The fire department assure the tenants that both bombs were just gas fires, so Grace Wexler takes extra precautions against an explosion at Angela's bridal shower—but that's exactly where the next bomb is going to explode.

Vocabulary

Scrumptious- extremely pleasing to the sense of taste

Mementos- an object that serves to remind one of a person, past event; keepsake; souvenir

Harried- troubled persistently especially with petty annoyances

Baffled- bewildered and confused

Woefully- affected by or full of woe; mournful

Pedicured- feet and toenails that are cosmetically cared for

Demeaning- degrading or humiliating

Bodice- a fitted vest or wide, lace-up girdle worn by women over a dress or blouse

Ritual- any practice or pattern of behavior regularly performed in a set manner

Waddled- to walk with short steps, swaying or rocking from side to side, as a duck

Petrified- to be numb or paralyze with astonishment, horror, or other strong emotion

Distraught- deeply agitated, as from emotional conflict

Comprehension Questions

1. What did the bomber use to set off the bomb?
2. Who does Mrs. Baumbach say Angela Wexler looks like?
3. Who is the only person to talk with Chris and ask him questions?
4. What happened just as Otis Amber entered the restaurant?
5. According to the fireman, what was the reasoning/explanation behind the bombs?
6. Where was the bomber planning to set the next bomb?

CHAPTER 14: Pairs Repaired

Chapter Summary

The snowplows free the trapped heirs from Sunset Towers. Angela is the first one out, checking under the hoods of all the cars in the parking lot from a hunch off their clues. Flora Baumbach and Turtle are next out, checking on their stocks. Turtle keeps to herself their large loss. Sandy McSouthers and Judge Ford talk about Sandy's family and financial troubles. He also shows the judge progress he's made on the clues: SKIES -- Dr. Sikes, AM BrothER -- Otis Amber; SHINing -- James Shin Hoo or Turtle kicks shins; and BROTHER -- Theo or Chris. Judge Ford mentions Theo's proposal to pool clues together but Sandy refuses because it seems too easy.

Returning to her apartment, Grace Wexler hears Otis Amber arguing with Crow about losing their clues. Even though they both have memorized the clues, Otis thinks another pair will discover them. As a joke about the looming gas explosions, Otis suddenly yells "Boom!" which surprises both women; he continues to yell "Boom!" on unsuspecting people for the rest of the week as he delivers groceries for everyone. Denton Deere and Chris Theodorakis meet again to discuss clues, much to the delight of Chris and annoyance of Denton. He knows Denton will keep returning as long as he doesn't sign his half of the check. In passing, Theo lets Angela know that the quote "May God thy gold refine" is not from the Bible or Shakespeare, but rather the third stanza of "America, the Beautiful." Angela then goes to visit Sydelle, who is still in the hospital. She briefly discusses with the psychiatrist that Sydelle made up her "disease" to get attention but isn't crazy, but when talking with Sydelle, Angela doesn't lead on that she knows the disease is not real. She tells her partner that her crippling disease is incurable but could have a remission of five years or more. When handing Sydelle's makeup bag to her, Angela discovers a letter asking for forgiveness and two clues taped to the bottom: THY BEAUTIFUL.

Vocabulary

Amends- reparation or compensation for a loss, damage, or injury of any kind

Brewery- a plant where beer is brewed by fermentation

Contender- one who contends; a contestant

Flattery- excessive or insincere praise

Obsequious- obedient; dutiful

Gross- without deductions; total, as the amount of profit before taking deductions for taxes

Oath- a statement or promise

Trousseau- possessions such as clothing and linens that a bride assembles for her marriage

Patriotism- devoted love, support, and defense of one's country; national loyalty

Deception- the act of deceiving or misleading; a trick

Remission- a period during which such a decrease occurs

Rigid- stiff or unyielding

Comprehension Questions

1. What was Angela searching for under the hoods of the cars in the parking lot?
2. Why did the doorman refuse to accept a tip from the judge?
3. Why does Alexander McSouthers suffer from bad headaches?
4. Who was talking in Grace Wexler's kitchen?
5. Why did Grace open the window even though cold air was blowing through?
6. Why were the tenants buying so many Westing Paper Products?

CHAPTER 15: Fact and Gossip

Chapter Summary

After the snow has cleared, everything goes back to life as normal: Turtle, Doug, and Theo go back to school; Judge Ford back to the court; and Mr. Hoo back to his restaurant. The five people who made the bet on Halloween - Sandy McSouthers, Otis Amber, Theo Theodorakis, Doug Hoo, and Turtle Wexler - discuss that night. They discuss possible ways Westing could have been killed, ending with Sandy telling Turtle a story of a soothsayer who predicted the day of his own death. Jake Wexler enjoys dinner at the Shin Hoo restaurant and tries to make conversation with his wife. He asks about the presents in their apartment, and she reminds him they are for Angela's wedding shower the next day. Mrs. Wexler also discusses a new advertising campaign for the Chinese restaurant.

Judge Ford and Sandy McSouthers, partners in the Westing Game, want to interrogate George Theodorakis and James Hoo. They order food from their restaurants but are disappointed when Theo delivers the meals. Going over clippings from the newspaperman, Judge Ford and Sandy review information on the Westing family. There is very little information on Mrs. Westing, no first name or maiden name. The final picture is of her in a black veil leaving a cemetery from her daughter's death. Neither Jimmy Hoo nor Flora Baumbach ever met Mrs. Westing. Sandy saw Mrs. Westing once or twice but remembers someone very different than Judge Ford's memory of Mrs. Westing. Violet Westing, his daughter, was supposed to marry a senator but local gossip said that she really wanted to marry George Theodorakis, Theo's dad. As Flora claims, Violet does look very similar to Angela Wexler, and George Theodorakis was the man dancing with her in the society page clippings. According to gossip at the time, Violet killed herself rather than marry a crooked politician. Judge Ford asks if Angela and Theo are involved romantically and Sandy hopes not: if Sam Westing wants to reenact that history, Angela Wexler would have to die.

Vocabulary

Presided- to occupy the place of authority or control

Injected- to introduce (a drug or vaccine) into a body part, especially by means of a syringe

Venom- the poisonous fluid that some animals, as certain snakes and spiders, secrete and introduce into the bodies of their victims by biting, stinging, etc.

Profound- being or going far beneath what is superficial, external, or obvious

Smirking- an affected, often offensively self-satisfied smile

Guffaw- a loud, unrestrained burst of laughter

Interrogate- to examine by questions

Bribery- the practice of offering something (usually money) in order to gain an advantage

Comprehension Questions

1. Why did Doug suspect that Mr. Westing's murderer may have been a doctor?
2. Shin Hoo told Jake Wexler that he thought he could squeeze him in at the restaurant. Explain why this statement is ironic.
3. Who is Judge Ford working with as a private detective to find information on the heirs?
4. Why is Judge Ford surprised at McSouthers' description of Mrs. Westing?

CHAPTER 16: The Third Bomb

Chapter Summary

In the Wexler apartment Grace, Angela, Turtle, and several people Grace thought to invite are celebrating Angela's bridal shower. She begins by opening gifts, and opens a particular gift very slowly. Impatiently, Turtle runs over to see what is inside; Angela jerks the gift away from her sister as fireworks fly out of the box. After the explosion, Angela has burns on her hands and a bloody gash across her cheek. After the police are called, the heirs begin to show their paranoid fear, silently accusing everyone else of the bombings. The captain says the bombs were just fireworks triggered by a striped candle in an open jar and that Angela wouldn't have hurt herself if she hadn't tilted the box towards her face.

Angela is taken to the hospital and placed in the same room as Sydelle Pulaski. Turtle thanks her sister for keeping the box from going off in her own face and has brought Angela's tapestry bag to the hospital, removing the "incriminating evidence." Turtle reminds Angela that being pretty isn't the most important thing but adds that the bomb was a dumb thing for Angela to do. Sydelle, who was pretending to be asleep, realizes Angela was the bomber—and is proud of her for it.

Vocabulary

Impractical- not practical or useful

Vaguely- not clearly or explicitly stated or expressed

Prank- a mischievous trick or practical joke

Amnesia- complete or partial loss of memory caused by brain injury, shock, etc

Despondently- feeling or showing profound hopelessness, dejection, discouragement, or gloom

Incriminating- showing or suggesting involvement in a crime

Comprehension Questions

1. Why is a large group of people gathered at the Wexler's apartment?
2. What does Angela do to suggest to the reader that she already knows what's in that specific present?
3. Do the police search all the other apartments at Sunset Towers?
4. Who is in Angela's hospital room with her?
5. Who do we discover is the bomber?

CHAPTER 17: Some Solutions

Chapter Summary

After many false alarms to the bomb squad, the tenants have a depressing return to life as normal. Jake Wexler offers to help his wife and Mr. Hoo with their clues, with the promise of giving up any inheritance if they win. Bouncing their ideas off of a new person, Grace and James Hoo have determined that the murderer is Ed Plum (PURPLE FRUIT/ED), the lawyer. Sandy and Judge Ford discuss the clues they have collected over dinner. They review their clues, mentioning that Mr. Hoo's connection to Mr. Westing has motive: Mr. Hoo thinks Sam Westing stole his idea for the disposable diaper. After Theo's discovery of a formula that spelled explosives and Otis' name, he runs to tell Doug even though it's the middle of the night. Theo knocks on the wrong door and Crow opens, pulling him inside. Before he knows it, he is kneeling and Crow is praying for forgiveness and salvation.

Vocabulary

Incinerator- a furnace or apparatus for burning trash, garbage, etc., to ashes

Bonbon- a candy that often has a center of cream, fruit, or nuts and is coated with chocolate

Culled- to gather; collect

Snooping- to pry into the private affairs of others, especially by prowling about

Eluding- to avoid or escape by speed, cleverness, or trickery

Comprehension Questions

1. Who did Mr. Wexler give a present to which resulted in a call to the bomb squad?
2. After talking with Jake Wexler, who do Grace and James Hoo think is the murderer?
3. What is Mr. Hoo's connection to Mr. Westing?
4. What does Theo discover when he analyzes his clue?
5. Who does Theo meet in the middle of the night?

CHAPTER 18: The Trackers

Chapter Summary

Turtle and Flora Baumbach—now called Baba after the bomb scare—continue growing closer with Mrs. Baumbach braiding Turtle’s hair and being in charge of watching the stock market, which increased greatly while Turtle was in school. We also learn from Sandy McSouthers’ notebook that Mrs. Baumbach ran a bridal shop with her husband before he left; had a mentally retarded daughter Rosalie, who died at age 19; and made the wedding gown for Violet Westing, though the bride died before her wedding. Also from his notebook, we are reminded of other Westing connections: Otis Amber delivered the letters from Plum, the lawyer; Denton Deere is engaged to Angela Wexler who looks like Violet Westing; and Sydelle Pulaski has no known Westing connection. Theo told Doug about his chemical discovery and tells him to follow Otis Amber, who makes several stops but nothing too suspicious. After a long day at the hospital, Denton Deere goes to visit his partner Chris and tells him to pack his things—he’s got an overnight at the hospital planned for some new experimental medicine.

Vocabulary

Conferring- to consult together; compare opinions; carry on a discussion

Broker- an agent who buys or sells for a profit on a commission basis without having title to the property

Propellant- something such as an explosive charge or a rocket fuel that propels

Ailment- a physical disorder or illness, esp. of a minor or chronic nature

Malady- any disorder or disease of the body

Coyly- shyly; modestly

Graft- a portion of living tissue surgically transplanted from one part of an individual to another, or from one individual to another, for its adhesion and growth

Swatches- a sample strip cut from a piece of material

Neurologist- a medical specialist in the nervous system and the disorders affecting it

Ransom- the sum or price paid or demanded

Comprehension Questions

1. Why does Turtle think it would be a good idea to call Mrs. Baumbach by another name?
2. Who was Rosalie and how did she die?
3. How is ammonium nitrate used?
4. What does Theo want Doug Hoo to do?
5. What letter does Otis Amber deliver to Doug?
6. How does Chris feel at the prospect of being “kidnapped” by Doctor Deere?

CHAPTER 19: Odd Relatives

Chapter Summary

Although Crow doesn't want to return to the Westing Household, Otis says she needs to return to collect her due. Otis also thinks he's discovered the bomber—James Hoo—which inspires Crow to take revenge for scarring her beautiful angel's (Angela's) face. Sandy McSouthers discusses Crow's past but is unaware of a Westing connection. Crow visits James Hoo, who she believes to be the bomber, but leaves knowing that such a charitable man (he gave her insoles for her feet) could not be the bomber. Angela and Sydelle in the hospital receive another group of clues from Chris—WITH MAJESTIES. Another look in the notebook tells us Grace Wexler's maiden name is Windkloppel, the same as Crow's ex-husband. She isn't related to Sam Westing as she claimed; she is related to the cleaning woman! Through the investigating, they also discover that Sam Westing made a mistake in asking Sydelle Pulaski. He meant to invite Sybil Pulaski, Crow's childhood friend.

Vocabulary

Soothes- to ease or relieve

Penance- a punishment undergone in token of penitence for sin

Distorted- not truly or completely representing the facts or reality

Blotched- a discoloration on the skin; a blemish

Vengeance- the desire for revenge

Chronic- having long had a disease, habit, weakness, or the like

Covetousness- greedy; jealous of other's possessions or lifestyle

Mutilator- to deprive of a limb or an essential part; cripple

Manipulated- to manage or influence skillfully, especially in an unfair manner

Comprehension Questions

1. How did Turtle defend listening to the radio in school?
2. Who does Otis Amber accuse of being responsible for the bombings?
3. To whom is Crow referring when she uses the term "foot butcher"?
4. How does Judge Ford react when told by Sandy that Jake Wexler is a bookie?
5. Grace Wexler is not related to Sam Westing. Who is she related to?
6. According to the judge, what was Westing's first mistake?

CHAPTER 20: Confessions

Chapter Summary

After much stock watching, Turtle and Mrs. Baumbach decide to sell their shares of WPP for a huge profit. Doug Hoo skipped school to follow Otis Amber, who went to a rooming house for a few hours. Theo wasn't able to meet up with Doug right away because of an accident; the lab he was working in exploded due to his own miscalculation of the chemical formula. Judge Ford finally gets the meeting she wanted with George Theodorakis, who tells the judge that Violet's mother broke up their relationship, not Sam Westing. Sandy was able to complete his detective log about the Theodorakis family after that meeting. Judge Ford also determines that Mrs. Westing, the former wife of Mr. Westing, must be the heir Mr. Westing is trying to harm and therefore the one Judge Ford needs to protect.

Vocabulary

Legitimate- in accordance with established rules, principles, or standards

Sprinted- ran quickly, a burst of speed

Wincing- to draw back or tense the body, as from pain or from a blow; start; flinch

Faltered- 1. to be unsteady in purpose or action, as from loss of courage or confidence; waver
2. to speak hesitatingly; stammer

Hack- a professional who renounces or surrenders individual beliefs in return for money

Eloped- run off secretly to be married, usually without the consent of one's parents

Plotted- a secret plan or scheme to accomplish some purpose

Loathed- hated, despised

Comprehension Questions

1. What do Turtle and Mrs. Baumbach decide to do with their shares?
2. Why didn't Doug's feet hurt anymore?
3. Why was Theo at the hospital?
4. Why did George Theodorakis struggle telling Judge Ford the story of Violet Westing?
5. Who does Judge Ford believe must be protected and why?

CHAPTER 21: The Fourth Bomb

Chapter Summary

Theo borrows Turtle's bike to continue following Otis Amber, whom they believe is the murderer. Theo discovers that these two—Otis and Crow—whom he thought were connected to the murder of Sam Westing are actually good people who volunteer at a soup kitchen, and it makes him feel dishonest for spying. Judge Ford and Sandy McSouthers finish discussing the information they have about the heirs with themselves, where Judge Ford reveals that she lived in the Westing House as a child but didn't have much contact with the family. She also says that he paid for her college degree and has yet to repay the debt.

The fourth bomb is placed in the elevator and explodes when Theo opens the door. Turtle also comes in contact with the explosion, which singes five inches off of her long braid. Instead of filling out the paperwork, the bomb squad releases Turtle to the custody of Judge Ford. The Judge talks with Turtle and realizes she is covering for Angela and that she was in the Westing House the night of the murder. In the hospital, Sydelle and Angela put all of the collective clues together and come to the realization that the clues add up to the song "America, the Beautiful."

Vocabulary

Fuming- irritable or angry mood

Blackmail- to extort money from a person by the use of threats

Lurched- to roll or pitch suddenly or erratically

Wretched- very unfortunate in condition or circumstances; miserable; pitiable

Derelict- a homeless or jobless person; a vagrant

Meticulous- taking or showing extreme care about minute details; precise; thorough

Appellate- of or pertaining to appeals

Arsenal- a collection or supply of anything

Singed- burned, usually by accident

Juvenile- young, immature

Divert- redirect, distract

Remedy- cure, either medicine or otherwise

Comprehension Questions

1. What does Theo want to borrow from Turtle?
2. After much secrecy, what is Judge Ford's Westing connection?
3. Why does Judge Ford think that Sam Westing paid for her education?
4. What was on the backside of the bomber's note?
5. Who confesses to the bombings in Judge Ford's apartment?

CHAPTER 22: Losers, Winners

Chapter Summary

Getting ready for his track meet, Doug eats a hardy breakfast. In the same context, we also learn that Madame Hoo has stolen many items to save up for her return to China. Jake and Grace Wexler talk on the way to the track meet, Grace being negative and critical of Jake the entire time. Even though it concerns both of their daughters, Grace cries out her worries and returns to her apartment. Chris is dropped off to Judge Ford's apartment because Denton has to go back to the hospital. They have a short chat and return to their independent work. Sandy McSouthers enters Judge Ford's apartment, dejected. Barney Northup has apparently fired Sandy McSouthers for no reason. Sandy tells the Judge he thinks that Otis Amber is actually Sam Westing in disguise, tricking them all and trying to hurt his ex-wife. On the way to the Westing House for another gathering of the heirs, Crow is very hesitant; she senses danger is upon them.

Vocabulary

Scrimp- to be sparing or frugal; economize

Tousled- messy, tangled, untidy, rumpled

Wreak- to inflict or execute, to bring about

Pompous- high and mighty; thinking you're better than others

Comprehension Questions

1. Briefly describe the note Turtle posted in the elevator.
2. Why would Grace Wexler be upset if she knew who the real bomber was?
3. Which of the heirs does Judge Ford think may be Sam Westing's former wife?
4. Who does Judge Ford think was actually in the coffin?
5. Why would it be difficult to recognize Sam Westing now?

CHAPTER 23: Strange Answers

Chapter Summary

The heirs convene again, per the request of the lawyer E.J. Plum; everyone comments on Turtle's new haircut. Each pair is given another check for \$10,000 and asked to give their answers to the will's puzzle. Partners reveal their answers, each one very different from the next. Written in the will—as silly as before—Mr. Westing gives specific instructions, sending Crow to the kitchen for refreshments; she returns unharmed, after filling Sandy McSouthers flask for him. Mr. Plum's directions are to tear open and read another set of clues in an envelope at specific times. The next clue said, "Go directly to the library. Do not pass Go."

Vocabulary

Fumbled- to make or handle clumsily or inefficiently

Wad- a small mass, lump, or ball of anything

Lolled- to move, stand, or recline in a relaxed manner

Regally- stately; splendid

Swathed- to wrap, bind, or swaddle with bands of some material; wrap up closely or fully

Turban- headdress worn chiefly by Muslims in southern Asia, consisting of a long cloth of silk, linen, cotton, etc., wound either about a cap or directly around the head

Ethnic- characteristic of a group of people sharing a common and distinctive culture, religion, and language

Gilt- the thin layer of gold

Bleary- 1. indistinct; unclear 2. blurred or dimmed, as from sleep or weariness

Ornithologist- a zoologist who studies birds

Slurred- to pronounce (a syllable, word, etc.) indistinctly by combining, reducing, or omitting sounds, as in hurried or careless utterance

Derisive- contemptuous; mocking, sarcastic

Flask- a flat metal or glass bottle for carrying in the pocket

Comprehension Questions

1. What did Otis mean by the phrase, "The turtle's lost its tail"?
2. What did Turtle convince Angela not to do?
3. What did the heirs receive in their envelopes?
4. Who do Angela and Sydelle believe is the murderer (their answer to the game)?
5. Who did Denton Deere suggest could use plastic surgery on his/her face?

CHAPTER 24: Wrong, All Wrong

Chapter Summary

As written in the will, Mr. Plum announces that all answers given so far are wrong and all partnerships are cancelled. From there, Mr. Plum walked out of the room and locked the door. After some paranoid thoughts and accusations, the heirs decide to work together and split the inheritance. Sydelle is pretty sure it has to do with “America, the Beautiful” and they begin writing the lyrics out. When Sandy suggests that everyone turn in their clues to be looked at, Judge Ford realizes that her partner is playing into Sam Westing’s hands—because he *is* Sam Westing! After arranging the clues, the heirs discover that the missing words spell Berthe Erica Crow. Immediately, Judge Ford leaps to Crow’s behalf and defends her innocence, but during her speech, Sandy McSouthers appears to have an attack and dies on the floor. Another document is read from Westing’s will that states if no one can come up with the answer in five minutes, the will is null and void. In the last minute, Crow herself stands up and declares herself the answer, and therefore winner. She gives half of her inheritance to the soup kitchen and the other half to Angela.

Vocabulary

Paranoia- baseless or excessive suspicion of the motives of others

Ravings- irrational, incoherent talk

Paled- lacking intensity of color; colorless or whitish

Condemn- to pronounce to be guilty; sentence to punishment

Vicious- reprehensible; blameworthy; wrong

Null- being or amounting to nothing; nil; lacking; nonexistent

Immigrant- person who migrates or comes to another country, usually for permanent residence

Fanatic- a person with an extreme and uncritical enthusiasm or zeal, as in religion or politics

Comprehension Questions

1. What does the chapter’s title “Wrong, All Wrong” refer to?
2. Because their partners are null and void, what does Theo suggest the heirs do?
3. What was Denton Deere’s diagnosis when Mr. Hoo claimed that the tea might be poisoned?
4. Which heir does Judge Ford believe is actually Sam Westing?
5. Using the clues provided, who does Sydelle Pulaski announce as the murderer?
6. What happens to Sandy after Judge Ford’s realization?
7. What does Crow confess to at the end of the chapter?

CHAPTER 25: Westing's Wake

Chapter Summary

The heirs try to make sense of what has happened—Crow's "confession," Sandy's death. Through their discussion, Turtle discovers that Sandy was not who he said he was. Turtle takes Angela's copy of the will and reviews it carefully, noticing small clues she had not previously noticed. Realizing that Sandy McSouthers was Sam Westing, Turtle believes she has three hours to solve the puzzle of the Westing will, but she still wants to win the inheritance. Without telling anyone her plan, Turtle begins to act as a lawyer, calling her first witness.

Vocabulary

Wake- watch or vigil by the body of a dead person before burial

Stoolie- a person employed or acting as a decoy or informer, especially for the police

Conscience- the inner sense of what is right or wrong in one's conduct or motives

Checkmate- the act in chess of maneuvering the opponent's king into a check from which it cannot escape, thus bringing the game to a victorious conclusion (win)

Bolted- sudden movement toward or away

Poring- to read or study with steady attention or application

Sole- the only one

Culprit- a person or other agent guilty of or responsible for an offense or fault

Dastardly- cowardly

Comprehension Questions

1. What does Denton Deere accuse Turtle of doing to Sandy McSouthers?
2. How does Turtle respond to his accusation?
3. What, according to Judge Ford, is the famous Westing trap that they all have fallen for?
4. Why does Judge Ford repeatedly call herself stupid?
5. What is the significance of November 15, the day of their meeting?

CHAPTER 26: Turtle's Trial

Chapter Summary

Acting as a lawyer, Turtle asks pointed questions at each of her fellow heirs in an attempt to prove Crow's innocence. Through Turtle's interrogations, we find that Otis Amber, the idiot deliveryman, was actually the private investigator who helped not only Judge Ford but Samuel Westing and Barney Northrup as well. He tells that he made a mistake with Sydelle Pulaski, inviting her instead of Crow's childhood friend Sybil. Denton Deere is called next, who claims he did not examine the bodies closely enough to tell how they died, let alone if Westing's corpse was even a real body. Sydelle Pulaski is asked to testify after Denton and is asked about her one "mistake," the one word missing from her transcription of the will. Judge Ford also receives a personal note, claiming her financial debt has been repaid in full. Madame Hoo makes a confession, handing over all the stolen goods she was planning on selling in order to return to China. Once back to the case, Turtle presents a convincing argument that Sandy McSouthers was actually Sam Westing. Reviewing the will yet another time, Turtle discovers that Sydelle did not in fact make a mistake in copying the will; the will was written to throw off the heirs: "The heir who wins the windfall will be the one who finds the... FOURTH." As Turtle is stalling for time to think of what to say next, the lawyer reenters into the library walking with Crow.

Vocabulary

Gavel- a small mallet used by a judge usually to signal for attention or order

Stenographer- a person who specializes in taking notes or dictation in shorthand

Flaw- an imperfection; defect; fault

Accomplice- a person who knowingly helps another in a crime or wrongdoing

Interceded- to act or interpose in behalf of someone in difficulty or trouble, as by pleading or

Bristled- to stand or rise stiffly

Baffled- to confuse, frustrate, bewilder, or perplex

Booty- reward; treasure; prize

Fib- lie or exaggeration

Benefactor- patron, supporter; someone who benefits from something/someone else

Comprehension Questions

1. Who is the new young lawyer in Judge Ford's court?
2. Why is everyone surprised when Otis Amber testifies?
3. Who are the three people who hired Otis Amber?
4. What is a coronary thrombosis in layman's (easier) terms?
5. According to Turtle's witnessing eyes, what did Crow fill Sandy's flask with?
6. Judge Ford believed that Sam Westing had assumed two disguises or identities. Who were they?

CHAPTER 27: A Happy Fourth

Chapter Summary

Crow and E.J. Plum reenter the library, announcing Crow's innocence and Plum's resignation from any Westing affairs. Reading the last section of the will, the heirs are disappointed to find that—even though they are all splitting the property and possessions of Sunset Towers—there is no mention of the two hundred million dollar estate; they had lost the Westing Game. Turtle is up to something, however, and is waiting patiently for Mr. Westing's final move. Suddenly, the Westing House erupts in fireworks and explosions. "Happy Fourth of July!" yells Turtle. After the twenty-minute show, the entire Westing House had burned down. Once the smoke has cleared, Turtle rides her bike to collect her prize; she has solved the puzzle. Sam Westing had four identities, and the winner was who finds the "fourth" identity. As Sam *Westing*, Barney *Northrup*, and Sandy Mc*Southers* (west, north, south), Windy Windkloppel had yet another identity. Turtle rode her bike furiously to the Westing Paper Products Corporation to meet the Chairman of the Board, Julian *Eastman*. Exclaiming with joy, "Hi Sandy, I won!"

Vocabulary

Masking- obscuring, hiding

Bequeath- to hand down; pass on

Deed- writing or document executed under seal and for a transference, especially of real estate

Forfeited- surrender, yield, relinquish, forgo, waive

Vengeful- revengeful, spiteful, vindictive

Smoldering- to burn with little smoke and no flame

Charred- burnt, scorched

Mimicked- to imitate or copy in action, speech

Inlaid- decorated with a pattern set into a surface

Comprehension Questions

1. What announcement does E.J. Plum, the lawyer, make to the heirs?
2. What does the will state is supposed to happen to Sunset Towers?
3. Why does Turtle say, "Hurry up, Uncle Sam, I can't keep up this act much longer"? What does she know?
4. Which heir finally solves the puzzle and wins the Westing Game?
5. What are the names of Mr. Westing's four identities? (Hint: Think Nature!)

CHAPTER 28: And Then...

Chapter Summary

Turtle kept her secret. She visited him every Saturday afternoon to play chess, but she had to hurry on this Saturday; she had a wedding to attend. Otis Amber and Berthe Erica Crow are getting married. The two of them move into an apartment above the soup kitchen, which is now in no threat of bare shelves with their inheritance money. Angela has enrolled in college again, after returning Denton Deere's engagement ring, while Theo is attending college as well. Chris is working with a tutor, as his new medication is helping him progress physically. Jake Wexler has given up both of his private practices (podiatrist and bookie) and is now a state official, while Mr. Hoo has followed Grace's advice and opened "Hoo's on First," a restaurant catered to athletes. All seems well with the heirs.

Vocabulary

Draped- to cover or hang with cloth or other fabric

Heirloom- a family possession handed down from generation to generation

Sobered- not intoxicated or affected by the use of drugs

Debt- something owed to someone else; usually money

Tutor- person who instructs another in some branch of learning, especially a private instructor

Toting- carrying

Abacus- device for making arithmetic calculations, consisting of a frame set with rods on which balls or beads are moved

Comprehension Questions

1. Whose wedding is Turtle going to be late for?
2. Who made the bride's wedding dress?
3. How did Judge Ford intend to continue Sam Westing's legacy?
4. How has Angela's life changed? Give at least two examples.

CHAPTER 29: Five Years Pass

Chapter Summary

Things continue to go smoothly for the heirs: Mr. Hoo's paper innersole sales are booming and his restaurant has taken off. Doug Hoo has competed in and won the Olympic 1500-yard dash. Angela is in her third year of medical school. The unmarried Denton Deere has become a neurologist, and Sydelle Pulaski is now engaged to Conrad Schultz, her former boss. Turtle, who now goes by T.R. Wexler, is in her second year of college even though she's only 18. She beams today because it is the first time she beat the master of chess, Sam Westing.

Vocabulary

Fragile- easily broken, shattered, or damaged; delicate; brittle; frail

Stouter- bulky in figure; heavily built; corpulent; thickset; fat

Nape- the back of the neck

Confetti- small bits of paper, usually colored, thrown or dropped from a height to enhance the gaiety of a festive event

Tango- a ballroom dance of Latin-American origin

Correspondent- a person who communicates by letters

Radiant- glowing, beautiful

Comprehension Questions

1. Why was Mr. Hoo almost happy?
2. What award did Doug Hoo win?
3. What had happened to Denton Deere?
4. What good things had happened to Chris Theodorakis?
5. Who was the chess game master that T.R. Wexler had finally defeated?

CHAPTER 30: The End?

Chapter Summary

Julian R. Eastman, 85, lay on his deathbed, though T.R. (Turtle) Wexler doesn't believe him. After years of successful college education, T.R. Wexler has stood by Westing's side, becoming his company's lawyer. On his deathbed, T.R. recounts the stories of all the heirs, telling where they are now, changing the truth slightly for the aging man; several of the heirs have passed away, but T.R. continues their stories as if they were still alive. Angela and Denton do eventually get married, as do T.R. and Theo, who becomes a writer. Sandy McSouthers/Barney Northrup/Julian Eastman/Sam Westing dies with T.R. by his side on the Fourth of July. Continuing on his legacy, T.R. Wexler meets with Alice, Angela's daughter, for a weekly game of chess.

Vocabulary

Orthopedic- the branch of medicine that deals with the prevention or correction of injuries or disorders of the skeletal system and associated muscles, joints, and ligaments

Subspecies- group somewhat less distinct than species usually are; geographical variety or race

Veiled- covered or concealed

Audible- able to be heard

Comprehension Questions

1. Who is dying at the opening of the final chapter?
2. Why did Turtle lie about Otis and Crow Amber?
3. What does Sam Westing know about Angela that surprises Turtle?
4. What is the irony of Jake Wexler's new position?
5. On what day did Samuel Westing die?

Discussion Questions

Chapters Clustered

Chapters 1-4

- Imagine what Sunset Towers looks like. Illustrate the towers using the description from the book and your own interpretation.
- Would you ever live there? Why or why not?
- Each tenant has a different reaction to his or her apartment. Choose one tenant, describe their reaction, and explain what that says about the character.
- There are two sets of siblings in this story: Angela/Turtle and Theo/Chris. How are these siblings similar and different from each other? Which one would you be friends with? Why?
- What is Turtle like? Make a character web of as many personality traits as you can think of. How do the different characters interact with Turtle—her mother, Grace? her sister, Angela? the other students, Doug and Theo?

Chapters 5-8

- What are your impressions of Sam Westing so far? What evidence from the novel has given you this impression?
- Grace Wexler is very open about her prejudices, even though she isn't aware of them all the time. How can you tell she is prejudiced against others? Give examples from the text. Are her other family members equally as prejudiced? Do they agree with her opinions of others?
- Sydelle, the attention-craving tenant, is an interesting character. Do you like her? Why or why not? Why do you think she wants attention so badly?
- Even though Flora Baumbach smiles all the time, she isn't happy. How can we tell the difference between a happy smile and an unhappy, depressed smile? Have you ever known anyone who smiled when they were sad? Why do you think people hide their true feelings?
- When the heirs receive their letter, they have to sign giving their "position." Which character's position is most revealing of who they are? What would you write down if you had to sign a position?

Chapters 9-12

- Turtle makes a very bold, sure guess as to Mr. Westing's will. The part that mentions "refining gold" deals with the stock market, according to Turtle. Do you think she's right? What do you think that part of the will means?
- Angela seems slightly depressed or despondent to many of the guests at Judge Ford's party. Why is it ironic that Judge Ford would ask about her upcoming wedding in order to cheer her up?
- Chris Theodorakis watches legs at the party. Why is he watching legs? Which of the characters so far have limps?
- Crow gives a surprising response to Angela in the kitchen. What is it and what does it show about Crow that we haven't already seen?
- Turtle, Angela, and Sydelle get into a heated argument in which Turtle mocks Sydelle's crutches and Sydelle tells Turtle she has a big mouth. Have you ever been in an argument where you said something you regretted? Explain the situation. Did you apologize after?
- During their argument, Angela thinks that Turtle's long braid is her "crutch." What does it mean to have a crutch? How could Turtle's hair be a crutch?

Chapters 13-16

- After the second bomb in Chapter 13, Angela and Theo have a conversation in which they discuss their future plans. What did Theo and Angela confide in with each other? What do we learn about them here? Why couldn't Angela answer Theo's question?
- In the scene where Sydelle is being carried away from the restaurant in an ambulance, why wouldn't she want attention for this real injury? What's different about this episode than her "disease" that requires crutches?
- At her bridal shower, why do you think Angela turned the gold box containing the bomb toward herself?
- Why does Judge Ford give her \$10,000 to Sandy McSouthers? Do you think she'll regret it?
- How can you tell that Theo likes Angela? Do you think she would be better off with Theo or Denton Deere? Why?
- Sandy tells Turtle a "profound" story about a man who laughed so hard he died, just as the prophecy claimed. Why does Turtle think this story is profound?

Chapters 17-20

- Why does Theo think that Otis Amber is the murderer? Do you agree with him?
- Of all the information the private investigator has uncovered for Judge Ford, which do you think is the most important to solving the Westing Game puzzle?
- Why does Crow want to enact revenge on James Hoo? Why does she suddenly change her mind about him?
- Describe Jake Wexler's relationship with Madame Hoo. Should Mrs. Wexler be jealous of it?
- How do you predict the new information about Berthe Crow and Grace Wexler will be useful in the solving of the mystery?
- Why do you think Judge Ford wants to protect Mr. Westing's ex-wife? Who do you think it is? Who would want to hurt her?

Chapters 21-24

- After following them around, Theo's opinion changes of Otis and Crow almost instantly. Did your opinion of them change after seeing Theo's discovery?
- Turtle reacts very differently to the picture of Rosalie, Mrs. Baumbach's daughter than she would have before. How has Turtle's opinion of Rosalie changed?
- Why do you think the heirs have been called to the Westing House again? Which of the heir's answers do you think is right?
- Why is the judge so confused when Sandy McSouthers suggests the heirs pool all their clues together to find the answer?
- Why do the heirs hesitate to turn in Crow, even though they all know she is the answer?
- The Westing heirs are asked two times in the story to give their signatures and titles or positions on a receipt. Compare the first and second answers they give to this question (Chapter 7 and Chapter 23). How do the positions/titles change, and what does this show about each heir?

Chapters 25-30

- Why do you think Angela waited more than five years to marry Denton Deere? Do you think she made the right decision?
- At the end of the story, how is Judge Ford able to finally repay her debt to Sam Westing?

- There are lots of weddings at the end of the book. Who gets married first? Next? Which couple do you think will be the happiest?
- Who do you think makes the best use of their inheritance money? What would you do with the money?
- Sam Westing turns out to be a man with many different identities. What five different names and identities does he use? Did you suspect these at all while reading?
- Why would Turtle lie about some of the heirs dying when talking to Sam Westing on his deathbed? Would you have lied to him or told the truth?

Post-Reading Discussion Questions

- Most of this book takes place in the apartment building Sunset Towers. How does this location affect the story? Can you imagine this story in another setting? What other kinds of places could a story like this take place?
- Chris says that each pair was given the perfect partner. Do you agree? How are the partners of each pair perfect for each other?
- In what ways do Grace Wexler, James Shin Hoo and Judge J.J. Ford show their prejudice toward others? How do their attitudes change by the end of the book?
- How does Angela rebel against her mother? Why do you think she does this?
- How has her daughter's death affected Mrs. Westing's life?
- What words and actions show Westing's forgiveness of his former wife?
- How is each heir's life changed by playing the game?
- Why does Sam Westing make up the Westing Game? He appears to have motivations involving his family, the people who knew him before the accident, and his future. Try to decide what his will is supposed to do. (The heirs all give their ideas of the "solution" at the end. You might see who comes closest to your ideas.)
- Do you think the Westing Game turned out as Sam Westing hoped? Explain your answer.
- Ellen Raskin has said that Angela is the character she most identified with, even though Turtle is the main character. Explain how the Westing Game is important for Angela. What is her life like in the beginning? What changes happen in her?
- Did you feel sorry for any of the characters here? Why? How would you help that character if you could?
- Turtle always kept her secret about Sam Westing, even from her own family, including her husband Theo. Why do you think she kept the secret? What would you do in her shoes? Can you imagine keeping such a secret from the people most important to you?
- What events or characters here did you find funny? Why do you think Ellen Raskin, the author of this book, included so many humorous details in her mystery?
- As you were reading, which of the heirs did you trust the most? Who did you find the most suspicious? Explain why you judged them as you did.
- Are you satisfied with how the story ended? If Ellen Raskin called and asked you, what you change about the story?

Activities to Support Standards Standards Labeled

[R08-S1C6-01] Predict text content using prior knowledge and text features (e.g., illustrations, titles, topic sentences, key words).

***Students will use elements of the text to predict what will occur in each chapter. Every few chapters, the students will also participate in a mystery game that requires them to form a group and make a prediction as to who the killer is based on the clues stated so far in the text.**

***Students complete a SQUEEPERS (SQP2RS) worksheet, creating questions and later answering them.**

[R08-S1C6-02] Confirm predictions about text for accuracy.

***Students will record their findings in the text chronologically, in response to their questions and predictions made prior to each chapter.**

[R08-S1C6-04] Use graphic organizers in order to clarify the meaning of the text.

***Students will complete a graphic organizer that accurately displays the beginning, middle, and end of each chapter read.**

[R08-S1C6-05] Connect information and events in text to experience and to related text and sources.

***Student will write a three-paragraph piece on their connection to one of the characters or events in the story. Students will later revisit this character or event to modify their response after the story has ended.**

[R08-S1C6-06] Apply knowledge of the organizational structures (e.g., chronological order, compare and contrast, cause and effect relationships, logical order, by classification) of text to aid comprehension.

***Students will be given the opportunity to identify various organizational structures within the story by reading the text in each chapter and providing at least one specific example of an organizational structure within that chapter.**

[R08-S1C6-07] Use reading strategies (e.g., drawing conclusions, determining cause and effect relationships, making inferences, sequencing) to comprehend text

*** Students will form groups to arrange events from the story (written on note cards) in order.**

[R08-S2C1-01] Analyze plot development (e.g., conflict, subplots, parallel episodes) to determine how conflicts are resolved.

***Students will be part of an interactive game that requires one student to begin by filling in the part of the story depicted by the teacher (teacher will request the student to write about the exposition, or the falling action). The next student to write will be asked to fill a different part of the story. The end of the activity will have completed the entire plot line. This is a type of informal assessment for each group of students. Each student will also be asked to independently identify elements such as: conflicts, subplots, and parallel episodes within the story.**

[R08-S2C1-03] Describe a character based upon the thoughts, words, and actions of the character, the narrator's description, and other characters.

***Students will use a chart (graphic organizer) to analyze specific characters from the story. Within this chart, the students will state the character's name, personality traits according to the reader and the author, position within the story, and relation to other characters.**

[R08-S2C1-04] Contrast points of view (e.g., first, third, limited, omniscient) in literary text.

***Students will be given excerpts from the text in a group and asked to label and discuss the different points of view within the piece of text. Then, the teacher will display his/her own excerpt on the overhead with examples underlined. The students will individually identify and write down the type of point of views underlined on the overhead.**

[R08-S2C1-05] Analyze the relevance of the setting (e.g., time, place, situation) to the mood and tone of the text.

***Student will draw excerpts from a hat. Each excerpt will contain an underlined word or sentence that clearly depicts setting and mood in the text. The students will be required to rewrite the underlined portion to depict a completely different setting that changes the mood of the text (based on what direction is given e.g., change to love, sorrow, anger, etc.).**

Graphic Organizers Attached

Predicting Character Traits, Pre-Reading Activity

Before reading, students will make predictions about each character based solely on their name. Students will also analyze how someone else could predict their own individual personality traits.

Predictions/Summary by Chapter, Pre- and During-Reading Activity

Before reading a chapter, students will make a prediction of the chapter's events based on the title. After reading the chapter, students will summarize briefly and determine whether their prediction was right or not.

SQUEEPERS (SQP2RS), Pre- and Post-Reading Activity

Before reading a chapter, students will make predictions and questions regarding the predictions, summarize the chapter, and answer their previous questions.

Character Connection, During-Reading Activity

While reading the novel, students will track the characters interactions, documenting their personality traits, connections to Sam Westing, and their connections with other characters.

Organizational Structures—Make it Make Sense!, During-Reading Activity

While reading, students will chart specific examples of organizational structures, giving the example from the text and the page number found.

Predicting Character Traits

Sometimes people's names give away clues about who they are, especially in stories. Write your first impression about each of these characters and how you predict they will act in the story.

Turtle _____

Barney Northrup _____

Berthe Crow _____

Sydelle Pulaski _____

James Hoo _____

Angela Wexler _____

Theo Theodorakis _____

Samuel Westing _____

Judge J.J. Ford _____

Flora Baumbach _____

Sandy McSouthers _____

→ Think about your name. Without knowing you at all, what would someone predict your personality would be like based only on your name?

Prediction/Summary

Chapter #	Prediction	Summary	Were You Right?
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			

16			
17			
18			
19			
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21			
22			
23			
24			
25			
26			
27			
28			
29-30			

SQUEEPERS!

Chapter _____

Survey
Question
Predict
Read
Respond
Summarize

Before you read: State two things you predict you will learn and two questions you think you will find the answers to after reading the chapter.

Prediction 1:

Prediction 2:

Question 1:

Question 2:

While you read: Give a brief summary of the events in the chapter.

Beginning:

Middle:

End:

After you read: Respond to previous questions with answers after reading the chapter. If questions are not answerable, modify questions so that they can be answered.

Answer 1:

Answer 2:

Character Connections!

Character Name	Character Traits	Connection to Other Heirs	Connection to Westing

Organizational Structures—Make it Make Sense!

Organizational Structure	Example from Text	Page #

Post-Reading Activities Extension & Enrichment Opportunities

- ✓ Write an obituary of one of the characters that passes away at the end of the story.
- ✓ Design a new cover page for the novel.
- ✓ Choose a character and list both their negative and positive attributes.
- ✓ Pretend that you are the author of this novel and that you are unsatisfied with the final copy. You have decided that the only way to improve the book is by adding another character. Write a brief description of your new character and explain how you will use them in your novel.
- ✓ Create a poster that you think will encourage customers to buy *The Westing Game*.
- ✓ Design a bulletin board in your classroom to promote the reading of *The Westing Game*.
- ✓ Research the writing of a will. Why might you want a lawyer to help with the writing of a will? Try and locate some funny or interesting wills. List your five most treasured items and whom you would give them to if a tragedy occurred.
- ✓ Read or listen to the famous "Who's on First" baseball routine by Abbott and Costello.
- ✓ Write a private dialogue between two of the characters in your story.
- ✓ Create a chart with three different classifications: Likely Suspects, Possible Suspects, and Least Likely Suspects. Based on your opinion, fill in the chart.
- ✓ Write a letter to Ellen Raskin telling her about your experiences reading this book.
- ✓ Prepare a test of 10 questions for your classmates. Give the test to a group of students.
- ✓ Keep a journal similar to Sandy McSouthers, documenting everyone's personal backgrounds and connections to the Westing family.
- ✓ Create your own mystery using "whodunit" vocabulary and detective plot twists.